

**REMARKS:**

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner restricted claim 15 and rejected claims 1-14. Claims 1-4, 13 and 14 are amended herein. No new matter is presented. Thus, claims 1-14 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

**EXAMINER INTERVIEW:**

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for taking the time to conduct an Examiner Interview on May 12, 2006. During the Interview, distinguishing features of the present invention, which are also addressed below, were discussed.

Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned if further information or explanation is needed regarding feature(s) of the present invention.

**ELECTION/RESTRICTION:**

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 1-14 and claim 15 were directed to distinct inventions. As mentioned above, claim 15 is cancelled without prejudice.

Therefore, withdrawal of the restriction requirement is respectfully requested.

**REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):**

Claims 1-4 and 9-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2002/0165803 (lwase) and claims 5-8 and 14 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,370,513 (Kolawa).

The Examiner maintains that lwase, at paragraphs 105-107, teaches storing a sale unit for every ingredient in association with stored menu information including "previously used ingredients of the menus" as recited in independent claims 1-4 and 13. However, the recipe database (35) in lwase is limited to storing individualized recipe information of each dish without associating or linking an ingredient of one dish with ingredient of another dish (see, paragraph 6). For example, ingredients a, b and c of dish 1 are stored separate from and independent of ingredient c, d and e for dish 2 (see, FIGS. 12 and 13 dish names "paella" and "ham gratin"). As such, lwase does not consider ingredients of other dishes in determining ingredients of a particular dish, thereby preventing use of common ingredients among multiple dishes.

Kolawa is directed to a preference vector depicting a user's preferences based on previously sampled items for making a recommendation of other items based on similarity of the

sampled and the other items (see, Abstract, FIG. 15 and corresponding text). Once recommendations are made based on the user's preference vector, a shopping list of all ingredients necessary for preparing the recommended dishes are calculated (see, col. 20, lines 36-56). However, Kolawa simply calculates the ingredients of all the recommended dishes including ingredients needed for one or more of the dishes for compiling a shopping list and does not, for example, factor in remaining ingredients of previously recommended dishes.

In contrast, the present invention automatically takes remaining ingredients of all previously distributed menus into account before searching for ingredients of a particular menu. Using the same example discussed above in connection with lwase, the present invention automatically determines if there is any remaining ingredient c (the ingredient in common between dishes 1 and 2) when searching for ingredients of a particular menu.

Independent claim 1, by way of example, recites that the ingredient information management apparatus includes "automatically comparing the amount of said ingredient searched out... with remaining amounts of the previously used ingredients of the other menus corresponding to the sale unit."

Independent claim 2 also recites, "automatically comparing the amount of said ingredient searched with amounts of the previously used ingredients of the other menus corresponding to the sale unit searched and outputting a result indicative thereof." Independent claims 3, 4 and 13 also recite similar features.

Independent claims 5-8 recite, "storing a first successful sale coefficient... of a first menu" and "a second successful sale coefficient of a second menu... in relation to the first menu", where the ingredients of the first menu are "linked with previously used ingredients of the second menu."

Independent claim 14 recites, "associating an ingredient constituting a first menu item among the menu items with a previously used ingredient constituting a second menu item among the menu items." Claim 14 further recites, "automatically searching ingredient information of each of the menu items responsive to a search request with respect to the first menu item" and "indicating when the ingredient constituting the first menu item is less than an amount of the previously used ingredient constituting the second menu item."

lwase and Kolawa are both limited to independent determination of ingredients and do not enable use of common ingredients among multiple dishes.

Iwase and Kolawa, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest use of "previously used ingredients" for other menus as recited in each of the independent claims 1-8, 13 and 14.

It is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over Iwase and Kolawa.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over Iwase and Kolawa. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, claims 9-12 recite, "transmitting ingredients of a first menu and a number of distributions of the first menu to a user terminal" and "transmitting ingredients of a second menu inquired in relation to the first menu and a number of the inquiries of the second menu to the user terminal". Iwase and Kolawa, alone or in combination do not teach or suggest these features of claims 9-12.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**CONCLUSION:**

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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